

In attendance: Jeff Davis, Faciliator (UMASS); John Clarkeson (EEA); Sara Cohen (DCR); Kerry Mackin (IRWA); Peter Shelley (CLF); Margaret Van Deusen (CRWA); Alan Cathcart (Town of Concord); Phil Guerin (City of Worcester); Margaret Callanan (EEA); Heidi Ricci (MassAudubon); Lee Breckenridge (Northeastern University); David Glater (Greater Boston Trout Unlimited); Tim Purinton (DER); Anne Carroll (DCR); Duane LeVangie (DEP); Martin Pillsbury (MAPC); Brian Wick (CCCGA); Laurie Burt (DEP); Glenn Haas (DEP); Jen Pederson (MWWA); Sue Beede (MRA); Kathy Baskin (EEA); Mary Griffin (DFG)

Meeting Objectives:

- Discuss elements of two potential programs/initiatives (Blue Communities and Linked Permitting) including goals, applicability, implementation, and funding

Items of Agreement:

- “Go with the Flow” is worth further development

Action Items resulting from today’s meeting:

- A subgroup of this working group will meet to advance the “Go with the Flow” proposal
- Comments regarding the “Go with the Flow” proposal should be directed to both Jen Pederson (mwwa@verizon.net) AND Kathy Baskin (kathleen.baskin@state.ma.us). COMMENTS DUE BY September 17.
- Sara Cohen will investigate inviting guests to offer a presentation on recent studies investigating the impact of recharge from various sources (stormwater, wastewater for example)
- Invite a representative of MassDOT to participate in offsets discussions related to stormwater
- The Tools Committee should help educate the Advisory Committee on the foundations of water quality standards and designated uses, and how these might relate to streamflow criteria.

Parking Lot Issues: A date for the next meeting was NOT established.

Meeting Summary

Introductions

Go with the Flow introduced by Phil Guerin

“Go with the Flow” is proposed as an incentives-based program designed to encourage communities to take steps to address stream issues. The proposal was first mentioned at the last Tools Workgroup meeting and Mr. Guerin was asked to put some details on the idea to prime our discussion. A straw proposal handed out (*See adjoining document at _____*). This was offered as a very rough concept paper and not intended as a proposal at this time, merely to spark discussion of general concepts.

Eligibility: initial inclusion based on meeting certain threshold criteria, with eligibility renewal available by continued activities designed to improve stream conditions.

Incentives: better access to water related grant programs.

Clarifying Questions

Question: The proposal gets at LID, could it also include more on open space protection.

Answer: LID is there as a threshold eligibility item, but open space is cited as a way to maintain eligibility and open space funds are included as recommended incentive grant opportunities.

This is proposed as a voluntary program, a use of the carrot rather than the stick. The initial use of an integrated water management plan would be an important first step to outline potential steps.

Question: Why a five year timeframe?

Answer: That is a realistic reflection on the municipal process.

Question: What would the components of the integrated water resource management plan be?

Answer: DEP already has guidance developed to help communities develop those plans. Such plans are already required, or at least the component which addresses wastewater issues, in order to receive SRF funding.

Question: Would there be stakeholder input in the development of the plan?

Answer: Very likely. Again, referring to current guidance gives us a place to start.

Questions: To maintain eligibility, there are a number of items listed. Would there be a prioritization developed in the plan?

Answer: That might be an element.

Question: This proposal is very community oriented – place within the municipality. Is there an opportunity for regional coordination

Answer: That could be possible. The proposal, as outlined, is really a first step. There is a lot of detail still to flush out.

Question: Is there a direct link to streamflow criteria?

Answer: It could be, once it is developed. This is intended to encourage and reward activities that could help recharge and impacts on streams.

Question: One of the incentives is access to SRF funding? Could there be a conflict in that the SRF project does not keep water local, or otherwise conflicts with the “flow” goals.

Answer: Items like this would need to be resolved. Perhaps the nature of the project would need to support the goals, and others would not receive the advantage.

General Comments on the concept:

Looking at the big picture, this is offered as a concept - an idea – and we need to ask if we like the idea in general. Perhaps a smaller workgroup could delve into the details of specific revisions.

The design of the integrated plan communities would need to create needs to be very flexible. There is a big difference between the urbanized communities with high impervious cover and those communities in less dense areas with large acre zoning and local water and septic reliance.

Keeping in mind those less urbanized communities, it may be wise at times to allow them to work on a collaborative basis to develop regional plans, both for planning purposes and cost considerations.

Lets think about who would administer?

Is there overlap with the CRWA Blue Cities program? Blue Cities has an urban focus on green infrastructure. If a municipality participated elements might help with ongoing eligibility.

The Community Preservation Act provides cities and towns with a funding mechanism to help achieve some of these better behaviors. Perhaps including CPA as one of the criteria should be considered.

This is a good plan in concept, but lets not incentivize conduct that communities should be involved in, or would normally be by regulation, but incentivize behavior “above and beyond”.

Who would administer? With DEP reduced in staff who could oversee this? Again following the Green Communities as a model outside consultants were hired to help communities develop plans. RPAs might be well positioned to assist.

We should not rely strictly on RPAs, but provide a mechanism where there might be broader opportunities for other non-profits to help facilitate plan development.

A smaller workgroup will be formed to investigate the details on this proposal. Comments regarding the “Go with the Flow” proposal should be directed to both Jen Pederson (mwwa@verizon.net) AND Kathy Baskin (kathleen.baskin@state.ma.us). COMMENTS DUE BY September 17.

Volunteers

Martin Pillsbury	Kerry Mackin	Duane LeVangie	Tim Purinton	Phil Guerin
Ann Carroll	Jen Pederson	Heidi Ricci	Steve Long	

Linked Permitting Opportunities

In the current draft of the MS 4 Permits established by the EPA, for any new development of 1 acre or more, in order to comply with the permit the community has to adopt the state’s stormwater standards items 3 – 6 as a by law, whether or not the development is in a wetland area.

This provision addresses recharge, striving to ensure that post recharge meets or exceed pre-development recharge. It also addresses with removal of total suspended solids

Discussion

Be cautious in your assumptions that recharge at a large scale will necessarily result in recharge impacting streamflow. There have been theoretical studies which have found little or no direct impact from stormwater offsets on a large scale, though on a smaller scale in urban areas there have been impacts predicted.

Studies in the Assabet have found that stormwater recharge may have little impact, but recharge of wastewater discharge may have significant impact. Consideration of decentralizing wastewater, changing systems or moving new systems away from surface water discharges toward developing groundwater discharges, could be a strategy to bolster streamflow.

Could DCR and USGS staff also prepare a presentation on the study looking at recharge issues.

Permit Streamlining: linking this to incentives program discussed above.

We have an open mind about created linkages across different permits. There could also be a link to the question on non-consumptive use, and adding potential credit for stormwater recharge. Perhaps a presentation on how that has been utilized before would be good.

Addressing Impervious Surfaces and Developing Trade-Offs

Offset Program table handed out – this was an unfinished product from years ago, and not intended as a proposal, but does provide a compendium of ideas that could be reviewed in an offsets package.

When and how would offsets be used? In order to determine this, the Advisory Committee should first address streamflow criteria. If offsets can be developed to help support those criteria, then the development would be of value. We might need the criteria to guide us, as offsets become a means to the goal.

Many of those who need to deal with this issue are not involved in this process. The development community, as well as MassDOT, should be involved as well.

Offsets could be used as mitigation opportunities, especially in cases of non-degradation. We have, at times, discussed “off ramps” to non-degradation in the category designation process.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

Could the Tools Committee play a role in educating the Advisory Committee on the foundations of water quality standards and designated uses, and how these might relate to streamflow criteria?

In sum, there are tools we will continue to work on, though few concrete conclusions from today.

Next meeting: no date selected

Other upcoming meetings:

Technical Subcommittee
14 September 2010
10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
100 Cambridge Street – 2nd Floor Rooms C & D
Boston, MA

Advisory Committee
28 September 2010
1:00 PM – 3:30 PM
100 Cambridge Street – 2nd Floor Rooms C & D
Boston, MA